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STRATEGY

A Lecture by
COLONEL ARTHUR L. WAGNER

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STRATEGY

A LECTURE DELIVERED BY COLONEL ARTHUR
L. WAGNER, ASSISTANT ADJUTANT-GENERAL,
U. S. A., TO THE OFFICERS OF THE REG-
ULAR ARMY AND NATIONAL GUARD
AT THE MANEUVERS AT WEST
POINT, KY., AND AT FORT
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STRATEGY

A LECTURE DELIVERED BY COLONEL ARTHUR L. WAGNER, ASSISTANT ADJUTANT-GENERAL, U. S. A., TO THE OFFICERS OF THE REGULAR ARMY AND NATIONAL GUARD AT THE MANEUVERS AT WEST POINT, KENTUCKY, AND AT FORT RILEY, KANSAS, 1903.

GENTLEMEN:—

In appearing before this audience to deliver a lecture on the subject of Strategy, I confess to a feeling of considerable embarrassment; for not only is it a matter of great difficulty to compress within the limits of a single lecture a subject which would require many volumes for its proper elucidation, but there are many officers present who are so familiar with the subject that I feel that I am "carrying coals to Newcastle," or at least relating a twice-told tale. The best I can hope to do is to present well-known facts in a new grouping, so as to bring out in strong relief in your minds principles with which you are already familiar.

The Art of War is broadly divided into the two subjects of Strategy and Tactics. The latter is briefly and clearly defined as the art of disposing and maneuvering troops on the field of battle; but it is more difficult to find a satisfactory definition for the former. The term "strategy" is derived

from the Greek word *strategos*, meaning a general; and Strategy has accordingly been described as the science of generalship. But this definition is not satisfactory, for some of the most brilliant exhibitions of generalship have been made on the field of battle after passing into the unquestioned domain of Tactics. In this connection it is necessary only to recall Frederick at Leuthen, Napoleon at Austerlitz, and Wellington at Salamanca. Strategy has been defined as the art of moving armies in the theater of operations; but this is open to the objection that armies actually engaged on the field of battle are moving in the theater of operations, and this definition would cause Tactics to be completely swallowed up in Strategy. Another definition of Strategy is, the art of moving troops not in the presence of the enemy; but this, too, is unsatisfactory, for Waterloo and Königgrätz both present illustrations of strategical operations culminating in the presence of the enemy and merging into the tactical operations of actual combat. A delightfully brief definition of Strategy is, the art of taking the enemy at a disadvantage; but, unfortunately, this definition has no other merit than its brevity. When we prepare an ambushade, when we conceal our intrenchments on the field of battle, when we provide our army with a weapon superior to that of its adversary, we are taking the enemy at a disadvantage, but we are not engaged in strategy. Indeed, if this definition were accepted, Dreyse, who invented the needle-gun, and

Von Roon, who placed it in the hands of the Prussian army, would be entitled to be classed with Von Moltke as strategists, for they were certainly placing the enemies of Prussia at a disadvantage. Strategy has also been defined as the art of conducting great military operations; but this, too, is open to the objection of embracing tactical movements under the head of Strategy; for a general who is directing the movements of a mighty host on the field of battle is surely conducting great military operations. Another definition is: Strategy is the art of moving an army in the theater of operations, with a view to placing it in such a position, relative to the enemy, as to increase the probability of victory, increase the consequences of victory, or lessen the consequences of defeat. I prefer this definition—perhaps for no better reason than that it is my own. Yet I would not be understood as claiming complete originality for this definition, for in formulating it I have merely endeavored to epitomize in a definition several able paragraphs in Hamley's "Operations of War."

It may be said that everything pertaining to war belongs more or less intimately either to Strategy or Tactics. When the engineer is engaged in the construction of a fortress to serve as a place against which an army can rest its heel, so to speak, when it pushes forward to encounter the enemy, or on which it can pivot in the maneuvers of a campaign, he is directly concerned with the subject of Strategy. When he marks out a line of hasty in-

trenchments on the battle-field, which will enable the troops to hold in check or defeat superior numbers of the enemy, he is playing his part in the domain of Tactics. Without the Quartermaster's and Subsistence Departments, it would be impossible to conduct strategical operations. Without the supply of arms and ammunition furnished by the Ordnance Department, Strategy would be a mockery and Tactics a delusion. The Medical Department provides the sanitary measures for the preservation of the health of the troops, and the means of removing and caring for the sick and wounded, so that the army can be in a good condition to march and fight; in other words, to play its part in both Strategy and Tactics. And so with every combatant and administrative branch of the army; if we analyze the ultimate objects of each, we shall find that they are inseparably connected with the mobility, the fighting power, the information or the morale of an army, and thus with its efficiency in either Strategy or Tactics, or both.

Tactics may be characterized as essentially synthetical and Strategy as essentially analytical. The former begins with the individual instruction of the recruit, passes through the school of the soldier, the school of the company, the school of the battalion, the evolutions of the regiment, the maneuvers of the brigades and divisions, continually combining units into larger tactical organizations, and finally it reaches its culmination in the handling of mighty masses on the field of battle. The latter

begins with a broad, general sweep of the geography of the contending nations; from this it descends to a selection and study of the theater of operations, the choice of an objective, and the roads by which the objective is to be reached; the subject narrowing down gradually from a comprehensive view of an enormous area to the few bloody acres on which the weal or woe of the nation is to be decided. It follows naturally that to a strategist a good map is as essential as a saw is to a carpenter, an anvil to a blacksmith, or a telescope to an astronomer. It is said that Napoleon, when asked to what he attributed in the greatest degree the success of his military operations, replied, "I lived on the map"; and surely no commander ever made a wiser use of military geography.

The principles of Strategy are essentially simple. Indeed, Clausewitz says, "In war everything is simple"; but he adds, "The difficulty is to attain the requisite simplicity." But it is not to be inferred that because the principles of Strategy are simple the science of Strategy can be mastered without difficulty or that its art is easy of execution. In fact, all great things human are essentially simple. When we read the works of Shakespeare, we are so struck with the simplicity of the beautiful aphorisms of "him who wrote for all time" that we are almost inclined to wonder why we never thought of them ourselves. When we peruse that wonderful aggregation of wise observations known as the Proverbs of Solomon, the truths therein are

so manifestly in accordance with a knowledge of human nature that we are perhaps inclined to underrate the genius of the wise king until we undertake to make a few proverbs ourselves. The steam engine, which has wrought such a wondrous change in the affairs and condition of mankind, which has been such a potent factor in civilization, depends upon the simple fact that steam injected into a cylinder will push forward a piston, and that the condensation or the escape of the steam will cause the pressure of the air to force the piston back into the vacuum thus created. From this fundamental fact the growth of the steam engine seems so natural and so logical that we almost lose sight of the genius of Watt. So, too, with the principles of Strategy. When we read the campaigns of Napoleon, in the clear light of historical elucidation, and follow his movements on the map, his plans seem so plainly to have been the ones best adapted to the existing conditions—to be, I might almost say, the *only* ones suited to the situation—that it is not until we reflect that facts made so clear to us by the historian were to the Great Emperor matters of inference and conjecture, based upon meager and detached bits of information gained through his secret service; that his movements were based upon probabilities which he fathomed by his knowledge of human nature, and his accurate estimate of his own and his enemies' material and moral resources; and that his campaigns and battles were conducted under conditions

of almost inconceivable responsibility, personal danger, physical hardship, and mental anxiety, that we begin to form a correct estimate of the genius of the pre-eminent warrior who always made the most correct and powerful application of the principles of Strategy; who generally achieved success, and always deserved it; and whose downfall was due to causes beyond human control.

The two great underlying principles of Strategy may be expressed in the homely axioms that the soldier, like every other human being, needs food, clothing, and medicine; that in addition to these common wants of mankind he needs an unfailing supply of ammunition; and that, all other things equal, two or three men are able to whip one. The more we examine the subject of Strategy the more clearly shall we see that it is based entirely on these simple propositions.

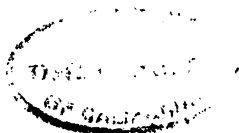
Before beginning military operations it is requisite that the supplies needed by the army should be collected at some point or points easy of access from the country from which they are drawn, and from which they can be readily distributed to the troops. It is necessary that these points should be safely located and well fortified, so as to be safe from sudden forays or anything short of the most strenuous attempts of the enemy's main armies. The region in which the supplies are thus collected and from which they are forwarded to the army constitutes the *Base of Operations*, which is defined by Jomini as "the portion of country from which

the army obtains its reinforcements and resources, from which it starts when it takes the offensive, to which it retreats when necessary, and by which it is supported when it takes position to cover the country defensively." From the nature of things, bases of operations and bases of supply are usually coincident; but, as we shall presently see, they are not always so. For manifest reasons of security, the base generally is covered by a river, a chain of mountains, or other natural features forming a good defensive line; but an army may sometimes be based upon a single point. This is especially the case when an expedition is landed on a hostile coast; thus in the invasion of Mexico, Scott's base was at first the single point of Vera Cruz. But in all such cases other points on the coast are seized and fortified as soon as possible, so as to give a longer base, and thus not only facilitate the supply of the army, but diminish the danger of its being cut off from its retreat to its base in case of adversity.

It is not sufficient that the supplies of an army should be collected and securely guarded at the base; it is necessary that they should be forwarded promptly and without interruption to the troops in the field. We hear a great deal about armies "living on the country" as they advance, but such a means of supply is usually practicable only as a mere temporary expedient, or as an auxiliary to the regular method of supply. An invading army has often been aptly compared to a swarm of locusts, and if it depends upon the resources of the region

in which it is operating, it quickly consumes everything in the line of its march. If we ignore all considerations of humanity to the inhabitants and limit ourselves merely to the question of the supply of the troops, this is all very well so long as the army keeps moving; but as soon as it is compelled to halt to fight, or for any other purpose, if its supplies be not forthcoming from the rear, it will soon feel distress, which may increase to positive suffering and even terminate in total disaster. Aside from the precariousness of supply, demoralization is invariably produced to a greater or less degree in an army that lives by foraging. When Napoleon invaded Russia, his army exhausted the resources of the country as it advanced. It reached Moscow in a demoralized condition; and while its sufferings in retreat were greatly intensified by the extreme cold and the harassing operations of the ubiquitous Cossacks, the mere fact of its being compelled to retreat over an exhausted country would in itself have been sufficient to work its practical ruin, even if the weather had been balmy and the Cossacks inefficient.

It follows, then, that there must be good means of communication from the base to the front, in order that the army may be properly supplied; and such communications are necessary also for the purpose of relieving it of its sick and wounded, broken material, prisoners and trophies. These lines may be compared to arteries and veins; nourishing the army with good blood from the base and carrying back the impure drain for purification.



It is obvious that the line by which the army operates is ordinarily the one by which it is supplied and the one by which it communicates with the rear. In other words, the lines of operation, supply, and communication are usually coincident; but, as we shall soon see, this is not invariably the case. The lines of supply may be rivers, railroads, ordinary roads, or routes of sea-travel. Rivers play a prominent part as bases or lines of supply, and thus often confer upon armies their distinctive names; for instance, the Army of the Elbe, the Army of the Rhine, the Army of the Potomac, and the Army of the Cumberland. But there is a limit to the proximity to which railroads and transports can approach the army, and under the most favorable conditions ordinary wagon roads must, as a rule, be largely depended on for the final supply of the troops.

As the army advances, its line of supply must, of course, be made secure, and this needs the constant detachment of troops from the main body to guard the means of communication. It follows, then, that in a greatly extended line of operations such detachments would continually weaken the fighting force, until at last its strength would be exhausted in guarding its lines to the rear. To prevent this, new bases are established as the army advances. To these new bases supplies are sent forward from the original base and accumulated in such quantity as to give the army new points on which it can depend, at least for a time, with some degree of independence of its primary base. Often

a point is gained to which supplies can be sent by easy transportation from the home region, and the former line can be abandoned. This adoption of the new point of supply and the abandonment of the old is termed a change of base. One of the most noted changes of base occurred in 1862, when McClellan, finding his base at Whitehouse on the Pamunkey menaced by the movement of Lee against the Federal right, transferred his supplies from that point to Harrison's Landing on the James River—destroying such as he could not remove—and falling back, during seven days of fierce fighting, to his new base. Thus Lee's brilliantly aggressive campaign, which had for its object the turning of the Federal right and the cutting off of the Union army from its base, resulted only in the establishment of his opponent in a more secure position than before; a position, in fact, which McClellan would probably have taken up of his own volition had he not felt constrained to extend his right up the Chickahominy to effect an expected junction with McDowell.

The popular idea of military operations takes no account of the vital question of supply. The non-military reader seems to think that armies can be moved with the same ease as the pieces in a game of chess; that an army corps can be moved as easily as a castle, a division as readily as a bishop, and a regiment with the ease with which a pawn can be pushed forward from one square to another. Hamley truly says: "It is extremely difficult to

persuade even intelligent auditors that two armies are not like two fencers in an arena, who may shift their ground to all points of the compass; but rather resemble two swordsmen on a narrow plank which overhangs an abyss, where each has to think not only of giving and parrying thrusts, but of keeping his footing under penalty of destruction"; and he adds that the general "probably directs a hundred glances, a hundred anxious thoughts, to the communications in his rear, for one that he bestows on his adversary's front."

As an illustration of the manner in which strategical operations are affected—in fact, regulated—by the paramount consideration of supply, let us follow the course of one of the principal Union armies from 1861 to the close of the Great War.

When the invasion of the Confederate States in the Mississippi Valley had been decided upon, the principal armies were based upon the Ohio River at Cincinnati, Louisville, and Cairo; the two former places being bases of the Army of the Ohio, under Buell, and the last, that of the Army of the Tennessee, under Grant. When the successful operations of Grant against Forts Henry and Donelson had resulted in the opening of the Cumberland River, Buell, pushing forward from Bowling Green, seized Nashville. Here a secondary base was established for the Army of the Ohio. Supplies of all kinds in great quantities were sent here by rail and by water; the city was strongly fortified, and, though the primary base was still essential, a new point was

gained by Buell from which he could advance against the enemy, and upon which he could, in case of reverse, fall back and be sustained for a considerable time independently of his original base. From his new base on the Cumberland River he advanced to effect his junction with Grant at Shiloh. After the capture of Corinth, Buell was directed to move against Chattanooga, an important strategic point from which further operations might be conducted in Georgia. But while there was no doubt as to the wisdom of choosing this objective, there was a decided difference of opinion between Halleck (then Commanding General of the Army) and Buell as to the line of operations, and quite naturally the whole matter hinged upon the question of supply. The difficulty of supplying the army was great at best, owing to the activity of Morgan and Forrest with their partisan cavalry, but Buell believed that, in spite of these ubiquitous and enterprising enemies, he could keep the line open from Nashville as he pushed on to Chattanooga. Halleck, on the other hand, regarded the line from Memphis to Chattanooga as the proper one for the supply of Buell's army, notwithstanding that the railroad crossed the Tennessee River twice, rendering necessary the rebuilding and guarding of two long bridges, and the still more objectionable fact that the line ran parallel to the enemy's general front, rendering its protection against raiding parties almost impossible. It does not need much strategical acumen to see that Buell was right and Halleck was wrong, but the

latter was the commander, and Buell was compelled to adopt the line proposed by the officer who was his superior in rank, but not in ability. Halleck finally gave a tardy consent to Buell's plan after the latter had begun operations on the Memphis-Chattanooga line, but it was now too late; for Bragg, who had concentrated and refitted his army at Chattanooga, took the initiative, and, skillfully concealing his movements, sent Kirby Smith north, turning the Cumberland Gap, moving upon Lexington, Kentucky, and threatening Cincinnati. With his own force Bragg now menaced Nashville, and, quickly moving by his right, marched for Louisville. There was nothing for Buell but to follow suit, and a race of the two armies for Louisville now followed. It might seem at first sight that the situation was reciprocal, and that while the Confederate Army was marching against Buell's communications, the latter commander might similarly move against those of Bragg. But such was not the case; for Bragg would have struck the line to Louisville while Buell was yet merely moving against the Confederate communications. Moreover, Bragg, operating rapidly in a friendly country, could be more independent of regular supplies than could possibly have been the case with Buell. Hence the race for Louisville, the possession of which by Buell meant, above all things, supplies for his army and the loss of which meant want and disaster.

Time will not permit me to give even a sketch of the interesting campaign of Buell and Bragg;

and show how the latter, influenced by political considerations and himself hampered by precarious supplies, failed to profit by his interposition at Munfordville between Buell and Louisville. Buell reached Louisville, Bragg retired, followed by the Union army, and the battle of Perryville, fought near Bardstown, though apparently a drawn battle, compelled the Confederates to retreat from Kentucky; for Buell's army was now fully supplied and his communications were in no danger, while Bragg, found it impossible to supply his army at such a distance from his base, and it was out of the question to live on the country in the face of an undefeated enemy in numbers superior to his own army. The retreat was made in good order, and with sufficient leisure to demonstrate that Bragg, though foiled, was not defeated.

Again the question of supply dictated the course of the campaign. Halleck urged Buell to make eastern Tennessee the theater of operations. The project was dear to the heart of President Lincoln, for that region was the home of the strongest loyal element in the South. Considerations of gratitude and sympathy for our friends demanded that they should be succored as speedily as possible, and military policy could not ignore the fact that the possession of that part of the State meant the addition to our army of many valuable recruits drawn from a population renowned for its warlike qualities. But the military objections to the proposed plan of campaign were grave, and they were

clearly pointed out by Buell. This plan would have required an advance of more than two hundred miles from the base, over a mountainous and difficult country, the supply of the army depending upon ordinary wagon roads, and these roads in an almost impassable condition, while the enemy could cover his own communications and be secure in the all-important matter of supply. Buell not only objected to the plan, but, knowing that it could not possibly be carried out, unhesitatingly concentrated his command on the line of the Louisville and Nashville road, between Bowling Green and Nashville, preparatory to moving forward from the latter base. He was promptly relieved, and General Rosecrans was appointed to command the army, which was henceforth to be known as the Army of the Cumberland. It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that Buell was hardly treated; but he shared the fate of strategists who offer views inherently sound but unpalatable to those in authority.

The new commander was no more tractable than his predecessor, but as he was fresh from the laurels of Corinth and high in popular favor, his views were received with more consideration—a condition doubtless facilitated by the opportune movement of Bragg to Murfreesboro, about thirty miles south of Nashville.

Moving forward from Nashville, Rosecrans encountered Bragg in the three-days battle of Stone's River, one of the most fiercely contested fields of modern times. Though tactically a drawn battle,

Stone's River was, to all intents and purposes, an important victory for the Union arms; for Bragg withdrew, left the field in the possession of his opponent, and took up a purely passive defensive. Yet, though the Army of the Cumberland had all the prestige of victory; though it was well organized, well trained, well equipped, and in excellent morale, we find it remaining stationary for six months. What was the cause of this? Rosecrans was not lacking in energy or enterprise; the President was impatient, popular sentiment demanded an advance. It was simply because the ceaseless activity of Morgan and Forrest, who destroyed railroads, burned bridges, blew up tunnels, and captured convoys, rendered Rosecrans' communications so insecure that it was not until sufficient reinforcements, principally cavalry and mounted infantry, could be provided to guard the routes of supply that the Union army was relieved from its paralysis and enabled to resume the offensive.

His supplies assured, Rosecrans again moved forward, and in a series of able maneuvers against the Confederate left so menaced the communications of Bragg as to compel him to abandon Chattanooga. This place was one of great strategic value, furnishing a strong base on the Tennessee River, and commanding the gateway of the mountains of northern Georgia. It was, in fact, too important to be definitively relinquished without the most strenuous efforts for its recovery; and Bragg merely fell back to a strong position on Chickamauga Creek,

where he awaited reinforcements and prepared for battle with Rosecrans. Realizing the perilous situation, the Confederate Government detached Longstreet's corps from Lee's army in Virginia and sent it in haste, by rail, to join Bragg in his attempt to crush the Army of the Cumberland. The battle of Chickamauga followed—a desperate struggle, in which each army lost a third of its strength. But, though the Confederates retained possession of the field, their hard-earned victory was a barren one. Rosecrans fell back to Chattanooga, followed by Bragg, who took up a strong position at Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge. Rosecrans was superseded in command by Thomas, and the Army of the Cumberland was reinforced by the victorious army from Vicksburg and by two corps from the Army of the Potomac. Bragg was defeated by these combined forces under General Grant, Chattanooga was secure in the possession of the Union armies, and it now constituted a third and most important base for future operations.

Grant having been appointed lieutenant-general and ordered to the East, Sherman was placed in command of the forces assembled at Chattanooga. Completely outfitting his army and gathering a vast store of supplies at Chattanooga, he advanced, early in the spring of 1864, against the Confederate army, which was now stationed at Dalton, under Johnston, who had superseded Bragg. Naturally, Sherman's greatest anxiety was in regard to the supply of his army. The stores accumulated at

Chattanooga could not last indefinitely, but must be renewed constantly from the bases farther in the rear. Forrest was again a disturbing element, and Sherman was fearful that he would collect a large cavalry command in Mississippi, cross the Tennessee River, and break up the railroad below Nashville. So great did this danger seem that an expedition under Sturgis was sent from Memphis against Forrest, and when it had met with a disastrous defeat at Guntown, a second expedition, consisting of two divisions under General A. J. Smith, was organized to operate against the troublesome Confederate leader. Smith succeeded in defeating Forrest at Tupelo and so stirring up matters in northern Mississippi that Forrest was occupied with troubles of his own, and Sherman's communications were secure from attack from that quarter.

The question of supply was the paramount consideration with both Sherman and Johnston, and it furnishes the key to the strategy of each. Sherman's objective was Atlanta, though of course his first and greatest object was the defeat of Johnston. In moving upon his objective he was compelled to depend for the supply of his army on a single line of railroad from Chattanooga to Atlanta, a distance of 110 miles. To keep this line open was a matter of vital importance, and to do so required the constant detachment of men to guard it. Johnston depended on the same line from Atlanta, but it lay in a region friendly to him and was exposed to less danger. It is evident that as Sherman

advanced his effective strength would constantly diminish with the lengthening of his line of communications, while the effective strength of Johnston would increase as the latter fell back towards his base. In fact, although Sherman received during the campaign reinforcements considerably in excess of his losses, his effective strength when he reached Atlanta was much less than when he left Chattanooga. From the very nature of things, it was Johnston's object to stand for decisive battle near Atlanta, and Sherman's object to force the decision near Chattanooga. If the battle were fought near Dalton, for instance, and Sherman were defeated, he could merely step back, as it were, to his base at Chattanooga, refit his army, await reinforcements, and resume the campaign; whereas, if Johnston were defeated, he might be beaten to pieces in his long retreat to Atlanta. Similarly, if Sherman were defeated near Atlanta, his army might be ruined before it could reach Chattanooga; while Johnston's defeat near that city would mean simply the loss of Atlanta, which he would surely lose as the result of a defeat anywhere on the line between the two cities forming the respective bases of the two opposing armies.

Unfortunately for Johnston, his strategy was not appreciated by his Government. This seems all the more remarkable, as the Confederate President was himself an educated soldier, who had had experience in war. Possibly the disapproval of Mr. Davis was influenced by his well-known unfriend-

liness to Johnston. If so, it is not the only instance in which the career of an able soldier has been blighted by enemies in power, for all men are not able to sink personal animosity in a consideration for the public weal. Johnston was relieved at the very time when he was prepared to make his decisive cast in the military game; and his gallant but incapable successor, Hood, throwing away his defensive advantages, shattered his army in a fierce assault against the lines of his adversary, and Atlanta was lost. While every true patriot must rejoice in the removal of Johnston, which contributed so greatly towards the conclusion of the war and the restoration of the Union, it is impossible, when we view the matter from the cold standpoint of professional interest, to help feeling a pang of regret that the Confederate general was not allowed to finish the great game of strategy which he had played so ably with his brilliant antagonist.

With the capture of Atlanta, a fourth base was gained, from which movements further in advance might be conducted; but the strategic situation was an embarrassing one. Sherman was now nearly five hundred miles from his primary base, and an enormous dissipation of force was necessary to protect the communications from Louisville to Nashville, from Nashville to Chattanooga, and from Chattanooga to Atlanta. The line surely could not be much further extended if the army was to retain sufficient strength to strike a vigorous blow. Other considerations vexed the situation. Hood was evi-

dently directing his army against Sherman's communications and was aiming at Nashville. To follow him would be to abandon conquered territory and give an air of failure to the hard-won campaign. Moreover, Lee's army was the head and front of the Confederate strength, and with its destruction the cause of the South must fall. Lee had long baffled the skill and power of his opponents, and it was desirable that a sufficient force should be concentrated to crush him. The genius of Sherman was equal to the situation. He decided to detach a force under Thomas to cope with Hood, and with his own army to push through the heart of the Confederacy and effect a junction with Grant.

A person ignorant of military matters might wonder, perhaps, why Sherman, having made this decision, did not at once proceed by the most direct route, across northwestern South Carolina and western North Carolina, into Virginia. But it requires the merest glance to see that his line of communications would have been so long and so dependent on ordinary roads as to render supply well-nigh impossible, and in case of defeat his army would be destroyed before it could regain its base. He decided to destroy Atlanta, abandon his base, make a gigantic leap, as it were, across the State of Georgia, and establish a new base on the sea. This necessitated living on the country; but Sherman knew too well the danger of relying solely on the resources of a region through which he must march a distance of three hundred miles, and while intending to "make

war support war," he took with him a train bearing twenty days' full rations for his entire command. If he should meet with serious opposition, if he should encounter unexpected obstacles, his command could, thanks to this provision, endure a delay that would otherwise be disastrous.

Arriving in the vicinity of Savannah, Sherman was able to communicate with the Union fleet, and was only twenty miles from Port Royal, S. C., which was in possession of the Federal forces. Here a large quantity of supplies had been collected for Sherman's army; but the transports and naval vessels in Ossabaw Sound were unable to ascend the Ogeechee River, which was barred by torpedoes and the guns of Fort McAllister. This fort could easily have been reduced by siege operations with a trifling loss of life; but time was pressing, and the necessity of the establishment of a base was too imperative to admit of delay. The fort was, therefore, immediately carried by open infantry assault, without artillery preparation, the torpedoes were removed, and the supply of Sherman's army was assured. A week after the capture of Fort McAllister, Savannah fell, and Sherman had a secure base on the sea.

Much has been written, related, and sung about "The March to the Sea." Its object is clear to military men, but in ordinary histories it is made to appear as simply a march of devastation, in which the only object was to sweep the hostile territory with a besom of destruction. It was a great and

successful change of base, to which object all destruction of the enemy's resources was subordinate and incidental.

So far as Sherman was concerned, Louisville, Nashville, Chattanooga, and Atlanta were now merely names of retrospective interest. His supplies were now brought to Savannah by sea; from this point he could set out on his northward march, and upon this point he could fall back, in case of reverse, behind fortifications and supported by the navy. It was, in fact, the most secure base the army had enjoyed since it left Louisville. But new bases would manifestly be necessary as the army proceeded through the Carolinas. Sherman moved upon Columbia, and the capture of that city was followed immediately by the evacuation of Charleston. This city had withstood a vigorous siege of nearly two years by both army and navy, each using the most powerful enginery of war then in existence; but now its evacuation became necessary, not only that its garrison might reinforce the army of Hardee engaged in trying to stem the advance of Sherman, but because its supplies would soon be completely cut off, and starvation would effect what shot and shell had tried in vain. A new base was now at Sherman's service, and in case of reverse it would no longer be necessary to fall back upon Savannah. But the march was a long one, and it was evident that neither Savannah nor Charleston would long suffice as a base of supply.

This had been foreseen, and provision had been made accordingly.

On the 15th of January, 1865, about the time Sherman left Savannah on his northward march, Fort Fisher, at the mouth of Cape Fear River, was captured by the Union forces under General Terry. This fort guarded the harbor of Wilmington, which had long been a sheltering nest for blockade-runners, and for this reason its capture was an important one. But there was another and still more important reason for its capture in the fact that Wilmington would form a base of supplies for Sherman's advancing army. The defeat of Hood having made matters safe in the West, Schofield with the 23d Corps was ordered from Nashville to Washington, making the journey of fourteen hundred miles by way of the Tennessee and Ohio rivers and thence by rail. Embarking at Washington, he proceeded to Fort Fisher, and, on the 22d of February, captured Wilmington. Though a new base was thus gained for Sherman, Schofield now prepared to establish a still better line from Morehead City and Newberne towards Goldsboro. Kinston, on this line, was occupied (March 14, 1865), and the railway to that point was completed without delay. When Sherman arrived at Fayetteville, he communicated with Wilmington; and pushing on and defeating Johnston at Averasboro and Bentonville, he entered Goldsboro, where he effected a junction with Schofield, and obtained welcome supplies from Kinston. Kinston was, in fact, his last base;

for he continued to be supplied from this point during his march to Raleigh and Durham Station. At the latter place he received the surrender of Johnston's army, and Lee having also surrendered to Grant, the necessity for secure bases and well-guarded lines of communication no longer existed. It should be noted that Wilmington and Kinston furnish examples of bases of supply not coincident with bases of operations, and the lines thence to Sherman's army are examples of lines of supply not coincident with lines of operations.

We have now briefly traced the course of the Union armies from the Ohio to the Neuse, through more than three years of war, and over an enormous theater of operations; and we find the question of supply the deciding influence of the strategical operations in every case. Let us consider, moreover, the heavy draft on the fighting strength of an army by the necessity of keeping open its communications. In the spring of 1865 there were, in round numbers, 1,100,000 men actually under arms in the Union Army. Of this great host there were, in contact with the enemy's armies, 120,000 men under Grant, in Virginia; 90,000 men under Sherman, in North Carolina; 15,000 men under Wilson, in Georgia; and 45,000 men under Canby, at Mobile—a total of but little more than a quarter of a million men. Where were the rest? With the exception of comparatively small forces engaged in guarding prisoners and garrisoning the sea-coast fortifications, they were all employed in protecting the

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lines of communication and holding conquered territory in the enormous theater of operations extending from the Potomac to the Rio Grande and from Ohio to the Gulf. The extent of this area can be best appreciated by comparing it with the theater of European wars. The seven weeks' war, in which Prussia broke the power of Austria and sprang into the front rank of military nations, was fought on an area scarcely equal to half of the State of Kansas; and the Franco-German war, in which the most renowned military nation yielded the supremacy to the new Germanic empire, was conducted upon a theater of similar area. If in the former war a Prussian army had penetrated entirely through the Austrian empire and Servia; and if in the latter a German army had pushed through France across the Pyrenees to Madrid, the distance traversed would in each case have been about equal to that marched by the Union armies from Louisville to Savannah. To complete the comparison, we should suppose the European army in each case to be dependent upon a single line of railroad for its supplies for nearly 500 miles of this distance, and to be entirely without base or communications for the remainder.

I would not abate one jot from the praise due the South for its magnificent struggle. In this contest the Confederate Army consisted of more than one-tenth of the entire white population, including in the latter men, women, and children, helpless infants and tottering old age; whereas, in

the strenuous efforts of the First French Republic, when the country was declared in danger, and all Europe was combined against it, the republican armies consisted of only one-twentieth of the population of France. I would not detract one iota from the praise due to the genius of Lee or Johnston or the heroic valor of the men who followed the standards of those great leaders. But the plain military fact, shown irrefutably by the map, is that the strategic situation was altogether in favor of the South and largely neutralized the superior numbers and resources of the North. To the North, too, is praise then due for its stubborn and energetic prosecution of the most difficult military task the world has seen since Napoleon undertook the conquest of Russia.

All strategic combinations, as already stated, are designed to increase either the probability of victory or to increase its consequences. In the former case the movements have for their object the concentration of a superior force at a decisive point; in the latter the menacing or the interception of the enemy's communications is a paramount consideration. The greatest consequences that can follow a victory are the capture or destruction of the defeated army, and this can generally be obtained only by cutting off its retreat or completely intercepting its supplies.

When a general is operating against two or more armies of the enemy on lines that permit him to concentrate his entire force and maneuver against

any one of the opposing armies in a shorter period of time than would be required for the enemy's armies to concentrate in superior force against him, he is said to be operating on interior lines. In this case he is in the best possible situation to maneuver so as to increase the probabilities of victory; for he can leave a relatively small force to hold in check or "contain" one of the enemy's armies, while he throws the bulk of his force against the other. Defeating the latter army, he can then leave a small force to conduct the pursuit or hold the ground gained, return to reinforce his former detachment, throw his weight upon the second hostile army, and thus alternate his blows from one side of the theater to the other, his force at the decisive points being superior to that of the enemy, even though his aggregate force be much less. In this manner Napoleon, in the campaign of 1796 in Italy, first struck Beaulieu, then Colli; and, skillfully alternating his blows, drove them asunder, compelled the capitulation of the latter, and drove the former in hasty flight down the valley of the Po. Similarly, in the Eckmühl campaign in 1809, making a brilliant use of his interior lines, he drove the Archduke Louis to the south towards the Tyrol, the Archduke Charles to the north across the Danube, penetrated between the hostile armies thus driven asunder in retreat, and seized Vienna. In a like manner, when McClellan was advancing up the Peninsula against Richmond and Pope was moving from the Potomac against the same objective, Lee, profiting by his

interior lines, hurled McClellan back to the James, menaced Pope, and when McClellan (in obedience to orders from Washington) had begun his retrograde movement to Yorktown, threw his whole weight upon Pope, whom he heavily defeated before he could be sufficiently reinforced from McClellan's army to turn the tide. In these cases it was the probability of victory that was the first consideration. If Napoleon *could* have defeated the combined armies of Beaulieu and Colli, the consequences of the victory might have been much greater than they were; but the only hope of victory lay in keeping the enemy's armies asunder and beating them in detail. So, too, in 1862, Lee's situation would have been hopeless had the Federal armies combined; but, encountering them separately, he was able to fight McClellan to a standstill and then inflict upon Pope one of the heaviest defeats of the whole war.

To utilize interior lines with effect it is necessary that the theater of operations should be suited in size to the nature of the operations. If the theater were too large, the containing force holding in check one of the enemy's armies might be completely routed or captured before the main army could return to its assistance, and victory in one part of the theater would be neutralized by defeat in the other. If, on the other hand, the theater were too small, the enemy might be crushed by a combined attack by the two armies of the enemy, as at Waterloo or Königgrätz. Moreover, interior lines are

much more valuable in the case of comparatively small forces than they could possibly be with very large armies; for celerity of action is indispensable, and of armies more than anything else it is true that "large bodies move slowly." Napoleon's most brilliant use of interior lines was made with small armies—at least small when judged by the standard of armies of the present day—his army in 1796 consisting of about 35,000 men, and his entire force in the Eckmühl campaign being about 160,000.

Let us now consider the manner in which the plans of the strategist may aim to reap the greatest consequences from a victory. For this purpose no better illustration can be found than the campaign of Marengo.

In 1800 an army of 100,000 Austrians, under Melas, occupied northern Italy, from which the French had been almost completely expelled. Of this army, 25,000 men, under Ott, were engaged in besieging Massena in Genoa; 18,000 men, under Elsnitz, were operating on the Var, covering the siege, and opposing Suchet, who, with an inferior force, was barely able to hold his own and keep the enemy from invading France. The rest of Melas' army guarded the issues of the Alps from the Apennines to the St. Gothard Pass. The Austrians were based on the Mincio, on which river were the two strong fortresses of Mantua and Peschiera. From the base their lines of communication extended from Peschiera to Brescia, where the roads divided, one going to Milan and the other to Pavia and from

Mantua to Cremona, where the routes separated, one passing north of the Po to Pavia, and the other going south of that river *via* Piacenza.

The object of Napoleon was to relieve Genoa and strike a decisive blow against Melas. Several operations presented themselves to his choice. He might reinforce Suchet and operate against Elsnitz. But Elsnitz could be promptly reinforced by Melas, and at the best a French victory would merely drive the Austrians back towards their base, and in falling back they would still cover the siege of Genoa. He might operate by way of Mont Cenis against the Austrian center; but the Austrians could reinforce their center even more readily than their left; the fortresses of Turin, Coni, and Allesandria were serious obstacles in the way; and the Austrians, if defeated, would, as in the former case, be able to fall back on their base. The third plan was to cross the Alps at the Great Saint Bernard Pass, concealing his march as long as possible, seize Milan, push on to Piacenza, and thus completely cut the Austrians from their base. In this plan the natural obstacles would have daunted almost anyone but a Napoleon. His chief of engineers reported the passage of the Great Saint Bernard Pass extremely difficult. "Difficult, I grant," said Napoleon; "but is it possible?" "I think so," was the reply; "but with extraordinary effort." "Very well then," said the First Consul; "we will go." The army was concentrated at Dijon. Suchet was to make active demonstrations against Elsnitz.

A force of 4,000 men under Thurreau was to make a feint by way of Mont Cenis. Moncey with 16,000 men was detached from Moreau's army in Switzerland to cross the Saint Gothard Pass and move *via* Bellinzona to effect a junction in the valley of the Ticino with the main army, 35,000 strong, which, under Napoleon in person, would cross at the pass of the Great Saint Bernard.

The famous passage of the Alps was effected by Napoleon with strenuous exertions, and the advance guard, consisting of infantry and cavalry, under Lannes, reached Ivrea and carried the place by assault. At the same time Thurreau emerged from the Mont Cenis Pass. The Austrian general mistook this force, which was accompanied by artillery, for the advance guard of a large army, and Lannes' command as a detachment engaged in a mere diversion. The main strength of the Austrians was accordingly concentrated to oppose Thurreau, and a single small division was sent against Lannes. This division was defeated by Lannes, who then advanced to Chivasso, where he ostentatiously seized boats as if intending to pass the Po. The main army concentrated at Ivrea and pushed towards Milan, Lannes' force now forming a rear guard and directing its march on Pavia. The Austrian right, under Wukassowitch, confronted by Napoleon and threatened on the right and rear by Moncey, abandoned the line of the Ticino and retreated beyond the Adda, completely out of touch with Melas.

Napoleon entered Milan, where he waited four days for the purpose of effecting a junction with Moncey, who, upon his arrival, was stationed so as to guard the line of the Ticino from any attempts that Melas might make to break through. Melas, learning of the arrival of Napoleon at Milan, the retreat of Wukassowitch, and the descent of Moncey into the valley of the Ticino, gave orders for the concentration of the Austrian army at Allesandria. Elsnitz was ordered to fall back from the Var, leaving only rear guards to oppose Suchet, and Ott was ordered to raise the siege of Genoa and hasten to seize Piacenza and defend the line of the Po. But Ott waited to receive the surrender of Massena, for which negotiations were then pending, and though the French garrison surrendered, he lost several days of priceless value.

In the meantime Napoleon had occupied Pavia, Belgiojoso, and Piacenza, and the communications of Melas with the Austrian base were completely cut. Ott, marching upon Piacenza, was defeated by Lannes and Victor at Montebello and retreated upon Allesandria. Napoleon now concentrated his army about Casteggio and moved against Melas, who was now at Allesandria. The battle of Marengo followed; Melas was defeated, and capitulated, giving up the country as far as the Mincio with all the fortresses, but being allowed to march back to the Mincio with his army. Northern Italy was thus regained; the surrendered force of Massena was released, the concentration of the French army

was assured, and the conditions were changed for the French from gloomy disaster to brilliant success.

By skillful strategy Napoleon placed his army in a position where defeat meant ruin to his adversary, but not to himself. Melas, when defeated, had no alternative except to capitulate or starve; but Napoleon, if defeated, could, at the very worst, have retreated up the valley of the Ticino and by way of the St. Gothard Pass, with perhaps the loss of his artillery. But while the brilliant combinations of Napoleon greatly increased the *consequences* of victory, they did not increase the *probability* of victory. Indeed, Napoleon came very near being defeated at Marengo, and but for the opportune arrival of Dessaix, who had been detached to Rivalta, the brilliancy of his strategy might have been obscured in tactical defeat.

Strategy, in fact, always culminates in tactics, and the ablest strategical combinations are useless if they can not be clinched with success on the field of battle. In 1812 Marmont had succeeded in maneuvering Wellington into a position at Salamanca such that the British line of retreat was intercepted, and the Duke, if defeated, would have been ruined. The French, on the other hand, while holding the British communications by the throat, covered their own; and in case of defeat they could fall back on their natural line of retreat to their base. Wellington had clearly been outgeneralled by Marmont; but he compensated for his strategical inferiority by a brilliant stroke of tactical genius

which sent his adversary flying in rout from the field, extricated the British army from its perilous situation, and enabled it to penetrate to Madrid and drive King Joseph from the Spanish capital.

It has often been said that though the principles of Tactics are constantly undergoing change, those of Strategy are fixed and immutable. This is not the case. Strategy has changed under modern conditions; not so much as Tactics, but just as surely. It is remarkable that the two most potent factors in producing strategical changes are two inventions designed primarily for the peaceful interests of commerce and having daily application in the affairs of the greater part of mankind. I refer to the railroad and the telegraph. Railroads enable armies to be concentrated more rapidly than was formerly the case, and, what is even more important, to supply them with a facility formerly undreamed of. The supply of the armies of Buell, Rosecrans, and Sherman, very difficult by railroad, would have been impossible by ordinary wagon-train; and it is not too much to say that we owe the preservation of the Union to the invention of the locomotive. It is the genius of Stephenson that has made the United States a great nation.

But while railroads render possible the concentration and supply of greater armies than could formerly be maintained, their influence ends before the contact of the armies takes place. There will always be a space between the fronts of the contending forces, in which the railroads will prob-

ably be broken up, and in which, even if the roads be still existing, in good condition, their employment would be too precarious to be seriously considered. When the opposing armies are near each other, they must still move by marching and must still depend in a great measure, or perhaps entirely, on wagon transportation for supply.

One of the most striking results of the introduction of railroads as a strategic element is found in the enormous extent of territory to which inferior lines are now applicable. The transfer of Longstreet's corps on interior lines from Virginia to Georgia would have been impossible without railroads. Superior railroad facilities may, in a *large* theater of operations, give to exterior lines all the advantages of interior lines. For instance, if an army occupying a central position, with its various parts at a much shorter actual distance from each other than are the corresponding parts of the opposing army on exterior lines, can concentrate only by marching, while its opponent can concentrate by rail, it is manifest that the superiority of concentration rests with the latter. But this can be the case only in a large theater; for the time of entraining and detraining must be taken into consideration; and a full army corps can easily march 125 or 150 miles in the time that it would take it (counting entraining and detraining) to go the same distance by rail.

In the transfer of Schofield's army from Nashville to North Carolina the movement was made on

exterior lines; but steam transport, by river and rail, enabled it to be effected in less time than it would have required the Confederates with their broken railways to make a corresponding movement, even if they had had troops available for the purpose.

The telegraph enables a commanding general to keep constantly informed of the operations of his different forces; to know what is occurring simultaneously in all parts of an extended theater, and to combine in a consistent plan the operations of forces which would otherwise be compelled to act independently. This, too, will affect the value of interior lines; for if the two armies on exterior lines be in telegraphic communication, the commander against whom the concentration is made can at once notify his colleague, who can then move immediately with confidence against the containing force opposed to him.

Another modification of the value of interior lines is caused by the increased power conferred on the tactical defensive by modern firearms. This, to be sure, will operate in favor of a containing force, but it will necessitate the concentration of a much larger body against the one of the enemy's armies that is to be defeated. To profit fully by interior lines, a general must be able to dispose quickly of the enemy's separated armies, and the prompt defeat of an enemy who will surely make use of hasty intrenchments and avail himself of all the power of the modern defensive will not be an



easy matter unless the numerical odds are enormously in favor of the assailant. We are, therefore, likely to find the containing force able to hold its own against one of the enemy's armies and the main force repulsed by the other, unless the army operating on interior lines is of a strength practically equal to that of the combined armies of its adversary.

Another new element introduced into Strategy as a result of the telegraph is the daily newspaper. The popular demand for news cannot be ignored, and even under the most rigorous press censorship information will leak out—a detached item here and another there, from which inferential information can be obtained even when positive news is lacking. It is said that Von Moltke first learned through the columns of a Belgian newspaper of the eccentric movement of McMahon, by way of Rheims and Sedan, to undertake the relief of Bazaine. The press will be a powerful factor for both good and evil in giving a commander information of the movements of his adversary and in betraying his own.

Let us imagine the Marengo campaign under the present conditions. The concentration of Napoleon's army is reported to a German newspaper in Cologne, and the news is at once telegraphed to Melas. A spy ascertains that Thurreau has only 4,000 men, and sends the information in a disguised dispatch to a confederate in Berlin, who repeats it to the Austrian headquarters. The advance guard of Napoleon scarcely emerges from

the Great St. Bernard Pass before the news is telegraphed to Melas. The orders for the Austrian concentration are sent out by wire, and the movements directed are facilitated by rail. Melas meets Napoleon in the angle between the Sesia and the Po. The Austrians have superior numbers and cover their communications; in fact, the strategic advantage is theirs. Under existing conditions Napoleon would never have adopted the plan which he carried out with such success. What he would have done it is idle to guess. We can be sure, however, that it would have been the right thing, and that his genius, with the aid of the railway and the telegraph, would have shone out more brightly even than it did. Indeed, it is not too much to say that if Napoleon had had railroads and telegraphs at his command, even his Russian campaign would have been a success, and St. Helena would be known to-day merely as an unimportant speck on the map of the Atlantic Ocean.

We have seen that the employment of railroads in war renders possible the concentration and maintenance of larger armies than were formerly known. We have also seen that the operations of hostile armies in the proximity of each other are necessarily effected by marching. These large armies will necessarily move more slowly than smaller bodies, and if they live on the country wholly or in part, the exhaustion of the region over which they move will be more complete. The question of uninterrupted supply has consequently increased

in importance, and strategic movements are more than ever dependent for their success on the efficiency of the Quartermaster's and Subsistence Departments. A new difficulty in the matter of supply will be encountered in the greater ease with which partisan troops, using smokeless powder, will be able to attack and harass convoys, and the guarding of communications will require more troops and greater efforts than ever.

From the conditions mentioned, it follows that there will now be more certainty in regard to the plans of your opponent and less concealment in regard to your own than in former times. Strategic surprise is practically a thing of the past. It is more than ever necessary to make correct plans in the beginning; to make a wise choice of the objective and the best lines by which to reach it; to provide with all possible forethought for the supply of the army, and to make effective dispositions for the protection of the lines of communication.

The choice of the objective in strategic operations is influenced by many considerations. *The enemy's main army is always the true objective*; but there will often be intermediate objectives as necessary steps in reaching the ultimate object. Thus the objective may be a point where a new base can be established, as, for instance, Chattanooga in 1863. The seizure of points may be necessary in order that naval bases may be established or blockade-runners deprived of safe harbor. These considerations influenced the capture of the forts at

Hatteras Inlet, N. C., Port Royal, S. C., Fort Pulaski, Ga., and New Orleans. Political considerations may also influence the choice of an objective. Thus, in the Great War, it was a matter of political importance, as affecting the sentiment of foreign nations, to be able to show that the Union troops had established themselves in the territory of each of the seceding States. The possession of various points on the sea-coast of the Confederacy, taken in connection with the country actually covered by the operations of the Federal armies, enabled the claim to be justly made, in less than a year after the outbreak of the war, that the flag of the United States floated in every one of the seceding States; though three long years of bitter war were still to pass before the triumph of the Union cause. In a republic the choice of an objective may be decided by popular demand. In 1863 a formidable expedition was sent against Charleston, S. C., and for nearly two years that city was the object of vigorous military and naval attack, though it was not intrinsically a strategic point of any particular value. Public sentiment in the North had, however, become so intensified and embittered against the city, which was looked upon as the cradle of secession, that the expedition was sent in obedience to popular demand; and at the present time it seems to have been inspired by a spirit of hatred and revenge rather than any true military considerations. A point possessing no inherent strategic value may become by accident an objective of the

greatest importance. Thus, at the outbreak of the Spanish-American war no sane strategist would have selected Santiago as an objective. The possession of the city would have conferred no advantage commensurate with the efforts necessary for its reduction, and the army possessing it would not have been able to use it as a base for operations of an important nature in any direction. But the moment Cervera's fleet came to anchor in the harbor of Santiago that place became an important strategic objective, and the operations in its vicinity were even decisive of the war.

That the enemy's main army should be the objective of military operations seems the veriest axiom. Yet Grant was the first of the Union generals in Virginia who seemed to appreciate this simple truth. His predecessors sought to capture Richmond; but his object was to crush Lee, knowing that with the destruction of the Army of Northern Virginia, not only Richmond, but the entire Southern Confederacy, must fall. He accordingly at once closed with Lee, and for more than eleven months kept absolute contact with his enemy, giving and receiving blows, until the Southern army, worn out and exhausted, was compelled to yield. The same principle is seen clearly in the campaigns of Von Moltke. In 1866 it was not Vienna, but the army of Benedek, that was the object of his operations. Vienna was considered only when Benedek had retreated toward the Austrian capital. In 1870 the great German chief of staff

paid no attention to Paris until he had captured McMahon's army and closely invested that of Bazaine in Metz. The methods of these two great commanders were, in fact, quite similar. Grant's rule was, "Always go ahead"; and in the Vicksburg campaign one of the considerations that induced him to go below Vicksburg and operate from Grand Gulf, instead of concentrating at Memphis and moving upon his objective on the line of the Mississippi Central Railroad, was that the former plan would seem to be a continuation of the movement already begun, while the latter would require a retrograde movement for concentration. Von Moltke's rule was: "Having decided upon your plan, follow it energetically; and so long as it is working out satisfactorily, do not allow yourself to be attracted from it by any other plan, however alluring the latter may be." Yet no commander ever showed greater ability than Von Moltke to change his plan quickly when a new one became necessary. It is said that Von Moltke was at breakfast when he received the first definite news of the movement of McMahon towards Metz *via* Rheims and Sedan. Ordering the dishes removed and calling for his maps, he dictated, before he left the table, the orders which caused 200,000 Germans, marching towards Chalons, to change their direction from west to north and enclose McMahon's army in the "circle of fire" at Sedan.

It is clear that the qualities of a strategist are not altogether the same as those needed by a tac-

tician. The former can usually make his plans in the quiet of an office, or at least in the comparative seclusion of his headquarters tent, from which all interruption can be excluded; while the latter has to make or alter his plans in the excitement and turmoil of battle, under circumstances of personal danger and of emergency demanding immediate action. In some respects, however, the qualities needed are the same for both. Each should be able to form a correct estimate of his own and the enemy's condition and available resources; and the strategist as well as the tactician should be a man of courage; for a timid man cannot so overcome his nature as to devise an aggressive plan, even if it is to be carried out by another commander. The strategist should have sufficient imagination to appreciate the losses and demoralizing influences from which his enemy is suffering and which are beyond his sight, as well as the similar distresses of his own army which are under his immediate observation. Grant, in his *Memoirs*, tells with simple frankness of his trepidation in his first independent operations, when he was opposed to the Confederate Colonel Harris, and his great relief when, on seeing evidences of the enemy's hasty withdrawal, he discovered that Harris had been as much afraid of him as he had been of Harris. This lesson was never forgotten by Grant; but, unfortunately, it was never learned by McClellan. The latter, deeply versed in everything pertaining to military science and the art of war, pos-



sessed of a brilliant intellect, endowed with physical courage of a high order, enjoying the confidence and devotion of his troops, was not a success, because he was so foreboding by nature that he magnified his own troubles and lost sight of those of his adversary. If he lost ten thousand men, he was keenly aware of his loss; but he could not realize that in inflicting this damage Lee had probably lost nearly as many and perhaps more. If McClellan had been intelligently supported by the administration, he would probably have captured Richmond; if he had been a *great* commander, he would have captured it any way.

To achieve success, a commander must have something of the gambler in his nature. He must be willing to take risks when his judgment convinces him that the probabilities are in his favor. A general who always plays for safety never achieves decisive results. Had Fabius retained command of the Roman army, there would have been no battle of Cannæ, but Hannibal would have remained in Italy until his death. Napoleon never hesitated to tempt Fortune boldly, but he tempted it with careful judgment, and not with rashness. Some years ago, in an article in the *Atlantic Monthly* Mr. John Codman Ropes, one of the ablest military critics of modern times, curiously ignored this element of generalship in commenting on Sherman's march to the sea. He pointed out that if Hood had defeated Thomas, the Confederate flag would have been carried to the Ohio River, while Sherman,

at Savannah, would have been entirely out of the theater of decisive operations, and his army would not have been available to stem the tide of Confederate invasion. This is all very true; but Sherman knew the ability of the general and the qualities of the troops to whom he intrusted the task of opposing Hood. The result justified his action and demonstrated his military genius. Had he remained with his whole army to oppose Hood, the defeat of the latter would have been more certain, but the war would probably have lasted a year longer.

The requisite qualities of the strategist and the tactician are so diverse that it is not strange that generals are rarely eminent in both capacities. Wellington was one of the ablest tacticians the world has ever seen. He never lost a battle and never even lost a gun; yet he was inferior to Soult and Massena as a strategist; he was outmaneuvered and outgeneraled by Marmont; and in the Waterloo campaign he failed completely to divine the strategic plan of his great antagonist. Blücher, too, was a tactician of consummate ability. He was the incarnation of energy, coolness, and physical and moral courage; but he was incapable of planning a campaign, and it is well known that his strategic brains were carried in the skull of Gneisenau. Sherman was one of the ablest strategists of modern times; but we may search the history of the Great War in vain for the record of any important battle decided by his tactical ability. Napoleon

was both the greatest strategist and the greatest tactician ever known. Marengo, Ulm, Eckmühl, and the campaign of 1814 in Champagne are masterpieces of strategy; and Austerlitz, Friedland, and Wagram are equally brilliant examples of tactics. Grant possessed in an eminent degree the qualities of the strategist and the tactician. To the coolness, quick perception, and prompt decision displayed by him on the battle-field, he united the deliberate judgment and forethought needed in planning a campaign. The Vicksburg campaign is the most brilliant one recorded in history since the days of Napoleon; and the more carefully the campaigns of Grant are studied the more surely will he appear as the pre-eminent American general. In making this estimate of Grant I am not unmindful of Shiloh, and Cold Harbor. It was not because of these battles, but in spite of them, that he must be given the palm of American generalship. The greatest general is not the one who makes no errors, but the one who makes the fewest and the least important ones. Napoleon said: "Show me a general who never made mistakes, and I will show you a general who never made war."

It is difficult for a general who is not a strategist to conduct a campaign even when it is planned for him; unless, as in the case of Blücher and Gneisenau, the strategist is constantly at the elbow of a willingly listening commander. In 1800 Napoleon proposed a plan for the operations of Moreau, much more brilliant and likely to produce more decisive

results than the scheme devised by the latter. The plan was too daring for Moreau's more prudent genius, and the First Consul, appreciating this, and perhaps recognizing that Moreau's self-love naturally inclined him to his own project, wisely allowed him to conduct willingly an inferior plan rather than compel him to undertake reluctantly one that was inherently much better. In the campaigns in Spain, Napoleon prepared for his subordinates strategic plans admirably adapted to the situation; but while the master mind could plan, the master was not present to execute, and none of his marshals was able to take his place.

Critics ignorant of military matters have been known to characterize campaigns as devoid of strategy and consisting of plain, hard fighting. It is as absurd to speak of a campaign without strategy as it would be to speak of a campaign without marching or fighting. The strategy may be good, bad, or indifferent; it may be exercised consciously by an able commander or unconsciously by a military ignoramus; but it exists in every campaign. The veriest military tyro or the most incompetent commander uses strategy the moment he begins to move his army against the enemy. It may be very bad strategy, but it is strategy nevertheless, unless the commander be too ignorant of his duties even to try to defeat his adversary.

The most severe and intolerant critics of military operations are civilians. They do not always appreciate the perplexities and embarrassments with

which a general is surrounded, even under the most favorable conditions; they seem to expect a commander to be endowed with supernatural prescience and intuition, and to demand of him a miraculous power of overcoming obstacles. They do not always seem to realize that the ablest generalship is merely human wisdom applied to human knowledge; and they often seem to forget that the greatest human wisdom is not infallible, and that the most careful and intelligent person may be misinformed. They do not take into consideration that the ablest plans may miscarry through the inefficiency, indolence, or treachery of a subordinate, or through a misunderstanding, delay, or loss of an order. With them, "Nothing succeeds like success." Military critics generally deal more justly with commanders. They know that success may be fortuitously achieved by generals who are entitled to respect neither for their military ability nor their personal worth; as, for instance, by Cleon of Athens, or Horatio Gates in our Revolution; and they know that the ablest generals are sometimes the victims of the sport and whim of outrageous Fortune. If centuries hence the history of Waterloo should be forgotten, and some antiquarian should discover Napoleon's plan of campaign without learning the result of the operations, an able strategist would conclude, after reading it, that it must have resulted in victory. Never was a plan more deserving of success; but Napoleon could not foresee the defection of Bourmont, the unfortunate wandering of D'Erlon's

corps between the two fields of Quatre-Bras and Ligny, the incapacity of Grouchy, nor the almost superhuman stubbornness of the British infantry; and the campaign, brilliantly conceived and auspiciously begun, terminated in a battle the name of which has become a synonym for complete and irretrievable disaster.

To my mind one of the saddest of military careers was that of the Austrian general Ludwig von Benedek. A gallant and able soldier, not of noble birth, he had risen by sheer personal merit in an army where individual worth was often blighted in "the cold shade of aristocracy." He had won laurels and achieved high rank in the Italian campaigns of 1848-49, greatly distinguishing himself in the battle of Novara. In the Italian war of 1859 he had shown such conspicuous ability, and in the battle of Solferino he had handled his wing of the defeated army with such consummate skill, that he was the one Austrian general who emerged from that disastrous war with increased renown. When in 1866 the Emperor offered him the command of the army in Bohemia, he modestly replied, "Your majesty, I am no strategist"; but, his sovereign insisting, he took the command which brought him against the superior genius of Von Moltke. The catastrophe of Königgrätz followed; he was relieved from command; his past glory and services were forgotten; he was retired from active service within three months after his defeat, and he withdrew to his estate in Istria to die of a broken heart. Inci-

dentally this shows that ingratitude is not monopolized by republics.

If, then, a commander cannot control Fortune, he should nevertheless do his best to merit its favors. He should try to do all that lies in the power of human prevision to prepare for every contingency that may arise, and he should prosecute his plans with energy and with prudent yet daring courage. If then he succeeds, he can enjoy the applause of his countrymen, conscious that he has merited it; if he fails, he can often have the consolation that he has *deserved* success, even if he has not achieved it, and he can always have the soldier's highest reward, "the consciousness of duty faithfully performed."

I regret that time does not permit me even to touch upon the influence exerted on strategic operations by the conformation of the bases of operations, the influence of natural obstacles, such as rivers and ranges of mountains, in retarding or facilitating strategic movements, the relation of fortresses to the operations of armies, and other important topics in the great subject of which this lecture is merely an incomplete skeleton. But I have already far exceeded the limits of my time, and I will conclude by stating what I believe to be the correct rule of Strategy.

Remember that your object is to meet and defeat the enemy, and endeavor to take the most direct means to accomplish this end. Look carefully to the supply of your army; protect your flanks

and guard your communications; aim, if possible, at the flanks and communications of your adversary; remember that the enemy has as much cause to worry about you as you have to feel anxiety about him. Having made your plan, stick to it unless compelled to change. Plan carefully and deliberately; then move quickly and strike hard.

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